

In The Claims:

Please cancel claim 3 and amend claims 1, 2, 4 and 5, so that the claims hereafter read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for teaching an individual, skill the method comprising:

providing a virtual world comprising:

a virtual environment;

a plurality of virtual elements within said virtual environment, each of said virtual elements being capable of interacting with other ~~of said~~ virtual elements within the virtual environment; and

user controls for enabling the an individual to interact with at least one of said virtual elements within said virtual environment;

wherein at least one of said virtual elements comprises a virtual character comprising a behavior state, an emotion state and a learning state, and wherein said behavior state, said emotion state and said learning state are capable of changing in response to (i) interaction with other virtual elements within the virtual environment, and/or (ii) commands from said user controls, whereby the virtual character is capable of learning a new skill; and

~~presenting a learning circumstance to the individual through the use of said virtual elements within said virtual environment;~~

teaching the individual a desired skill by inducing the individual to actively teach the desired skill to a virtual character within the virtual environment, wherein the teaching is effected by:

(i) prompting the individual to explicitly teach the desired skill to the virtual character within said virtual environment, ~~such that by teaching the desired skill to the virtual character, the individual also learns the skill;~~ and

(ii) providing a positive response ~~result~~ to the individual when the ~~individual teaches the desired skill to the~~ virtual character learns the desired skill.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ instructions are provided to a virtual character.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2 ~~1~~ wherein said instructions comprise direct instructions.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2 ~~1~~ wherein said instructions comprise indirect instructions.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein said indirect instructions comprise providing an example.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein said indirect instructions comprise creating an inference.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said virtual environment is configured so that additional virtual elements can be introduced into said virtual environment.